

subjects, and it was a very cordial conversation. I was impressed by the questions, and I think it helped them understand how I think and how I run the White House and how we deal with threats.

John [John King, CNN].

Joint Appearance With Vice President Cheney

Q. Mr. President, as you know, a lot of critics suggested that you wanted to appear jointly with the Vice President so that you two could keep your stories straight, or something—

The President. Yes.

Q. —can you tell us what you think of the value of appearing together and how you would answer those critics?

The President. Yes. First of all, look, if we had something to hide, we wouldn't have met with them in the first place. We answered all their questions, and as I say, I think I—I came away good about the session, because I wanted them to know how I set strategy, how we run the White House, how we deal with threats. The Vice President answered a lot of their questions—answered all their questions. And I think it was important for them to see our body language as well, how we work together.

But it was—you know, the Commissioners will speak for themselves over time. They will let you know whether they thought it was a fruitful series of discussions. I think they did. I think they found it to be useful.

Yes.

Transcript

Q. Mr. President, don't you think that the families deserve to have a transcript or to be able to see what you said?

The President. Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters], you asked me that question yesterday.

Q. I'm hoping for an answer today.

The President. I've got the same answer. Yes.

Al Qaida

Q. Mr. President, can you say with any confidence that there are no Al Qaida operatives active in the country today?

The President. No, I can't say that.

Q. Did the Commission ask you about that?

The President. No, they didn't. But I'm not going to get into any more details about what they asked me. I told you I wasn't going to get into details about what they asked me, and then I just fell into your trap.

But no, let me talk about vulnerabilities, and then I've got to get back to work. We are still vulnerable to attack. And the reason why is, Al Qaida still exists. Al Qaida is dangerous. Al Qaida hates us. And we have to be correct 100 percent of the time in defending America, and they've got to be right once. And therefore, we are vulnerable.

But people need to know, we're working—we, the government, at all levels—are working long hours to protect America. We're doing the best we can. The best way to secure America, however, is to stay on the offensive and bring those people to justice before they harm America again. And that's what we're continuing to do. But yes, so long as there's an Al Qaida enemy that is willing to kill, we are vulnerable.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:16 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas H. Kean, Chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, Vice Chairman, National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Statement on Senate Action on the Proposed "Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act"

April 29, 2004

I commend the Senate for moving forward to expand access to broadband technology. The "Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act" is an important step toward permanently banning access taxes on broadband that will help make high-speed Internet services more affordable, increase the number of broadband users, and enhance our Nation's economic competitiveness.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada

April 30, 2004

President Bush. The Prime Minister and I will have some opening comments. We'll answer two questions per side.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. I'm glad you're here. I've really been looking forward to this meeting because I view it as a meeting between friends and allies.

I really appreciate the Prime Minister's clear vision about the world in which we live. He understands the danger of terror. He understands the opportunity of trade, and he understands that we share values that will—that are so important, the values of freedom, human dignity. We care about the human condition. I appreciate your concern about working together to help heal those who hurt, provide medicines for those who suffer from a disease.

We've got a good friend in Canada. It's an important relationship. It's a crucial relationship, and it's one that I look forward to continuing to nurture with this Prime Minister.

Welcome.

Prime Minister Martin. Well, thank you, Mr. President. We really did have a very, very good discussion. We discussed a wide range of areas, and we're going to continue over lunch. And we're doing it within the context of our shared values and the fact that we share much more than a continent. We talked about national security and Canada's new national security policy, which makes it very clear that we're going to defend the northern half of North America, and we recognize our responsibility to those in the United States, with whom we share the continent.

We discussed a number of issues between us. We talked about—we talked about the whole question of BSE, mad cow, and I must say that the President was very encouraging. We also—

[At this point, the Prime Minister spoke in French, and no translation was provided.]

We talked about Haiti. We talked about a wide range of issues. And I must say, Mr.

President, that it's very clear that Canada and the United States, working together, we can make great progress.

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, 134 soldiers have died in Iraq this month, more than any other month. A year after you declared an end to major combat, are things getting worse in Iraq rather than better?

President Bush. First, any time you talk about somebody who died in Iraq or in Afghanistan is a moment for me to thank them and their families for their sacrifice. And their sacrifice will not go in vain because there will be a free Iraq. And a free Iraq is in the interests of our two nations. A free Iraq is in the interests of world peace, because free societies do not harbor terrorists, free societies do not threaten people or use weapons of mass destruction.

Q. Mr. President—sorry.

President Bush. A year ago, I did give the speech from the carrier, saying that we had achieved an important objective, that we'd accomplished a mission, which was the removal of Saddam Hussein. And as a result, there are no longer torture chambers or rape rooms or mass graves in Iraq. As a result, a friend of terror has been removed and now sits in a jail. I also said on that carrier that day that there was still difficult work ahead.

And we've faced tough times in Iraq, Mr. Prime Minister. We've had some tough times. We've had some tough fighting, because there are people who hate the idea of a free Iraq. They're trying to stop progress, because they understand what freedom means to their terrorist ambitions.

And so we're making progress, you bet. There's a strategy toward freedom. One of it, of course, is to continue to deal with those who are trying to stop the Iraqi people from realizing their ambitions of a free society. Whether it be in Fallujah or elsewhere, we will deal with them, those few who are stopping the hopes of many.

There's a political strategy, and the Prime Minister and I will talk about that over lunch, Mr. Brahimi's mission of putting together an entity to which we will transfer sovereignty. No, there is a strategy that will help us achieve the objective, which is a free and